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The University of Montana

NEWS RELEASE

University Communications
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(406) 243-2522

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June 14, 1994

NATIONAL SURVEY RANKS UM LAW SCHOOL NEAR THE TOP

MISSOULA --

There's a reason why more than 2,700 prospective law students have inquired about filling 75 slots in next year's freshman class of Montana's only law school.

The reason is simply this: The University of Montana School of Law offers a better quality of life than nearly any other law school nationwide, at least according to those who would know best, students.

In a recent survey of 18,000 law students at 165 law schools nationwide, UM's law school ranked fifth for quality of life. Harvard Law School, on the other hand, was dead last.

What's more, UM's law school placed 11th for teaching quality, well within the top 10 percent, and it placed 16th overall.

"The results of the survey merely confirm what we've always known," said Dean Rodney Smith. "We are a student-oriented school that teaches exceedingly well."

Only for its facilities did the school's ranking slip, but even in that category UM was in the top 50 percent, ahead of 98 other schools.

"We have done very well with very little," Smith said, noting that of the same 165 law schools, UM has the lowest faculty salaries and the most poorly funded library.

The survey was sponsored by the Princeton Review, Princeton University's law review; the results were published in the April/May issue of The National Jurist.

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The National Jurist's report included students' responses to 11 questions in three categories: faculty, school facilities and quality of life. The questions summing up law school quality of life measured students' competitiveness, their sense of community and how well female and minority students are treated by faculty and students.

The faculty category addressed teaching quality, faculty-student relations, faculty diversity and the degree of challenge within classes. And the facilities category assessed what students thought of research resources, library staff and school facilities in general.

Despite its funding woes, UM's law school continues to outpace others in terms of student performance, consistently producing national champion moot court, trial advocacy and client counseling teams, Smith said.

Meanwhile, the law school is looking for new revenue sources, including both in- and out-of-state private donors, and considering raising tuition and increasing the number of out-of-state students enrolled, Smith said.

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Contact: UM law school Dean Rodney Smith, 243-4311

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Montana law journals, specialized western, weeklies and dailies
Lawsurvey.rl